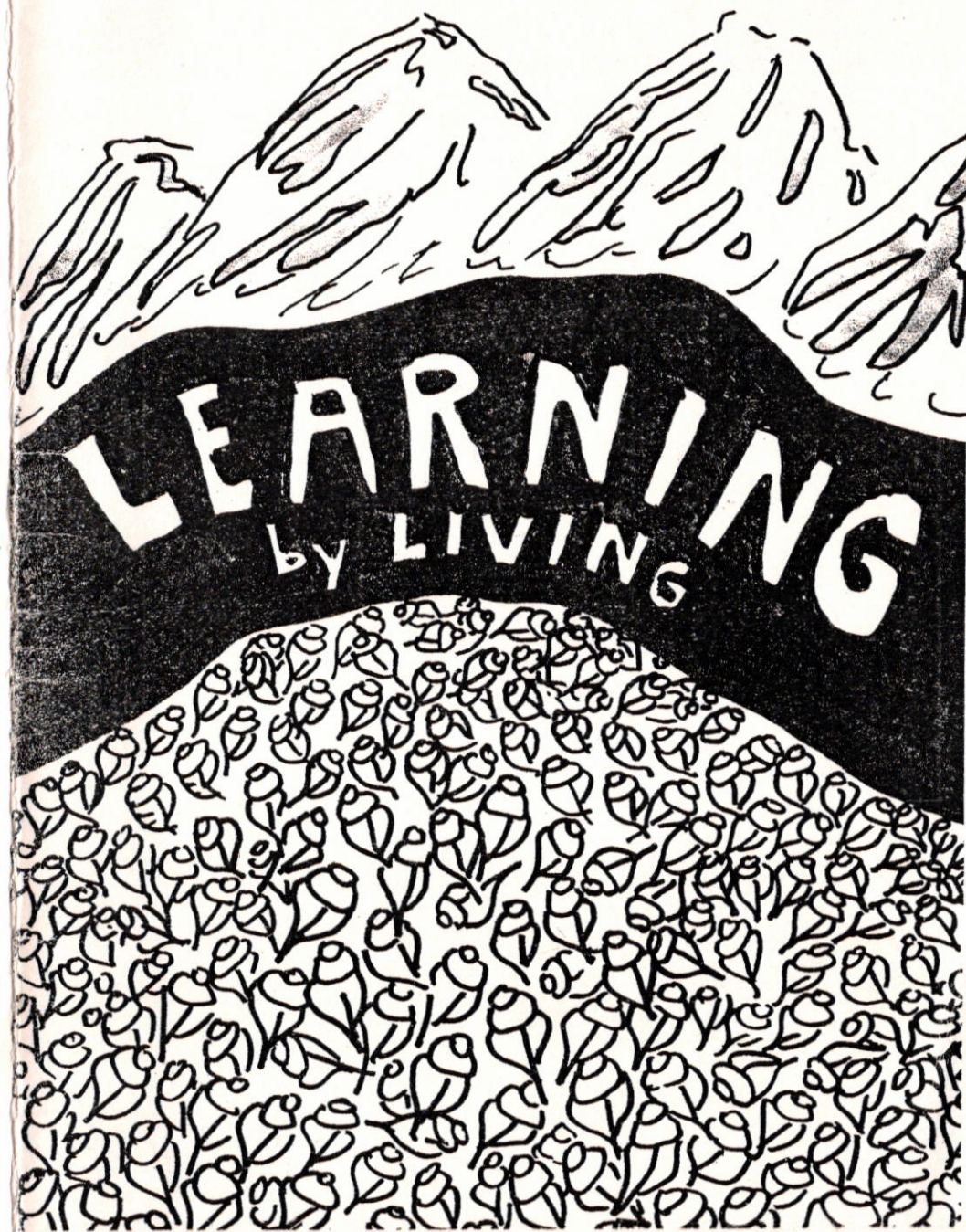




"Many students, especially those who are poor, intuitively know what schools do for them. They school them to confuse the process and substance. Once these become blurred, a new logic is assumed: the more treatment there is, the better are the results; or escalation leads to success. The pupil is thereby "schooled" to confuse teaching with learning, grade advancement with education, a diploma with competence, and fluency with the ability to say something new. His imagination is "schooled" to accept service in place of value. Medical treatment is mistaken for healthcare, social work for the improvement of community life, police protection for safety, military poise for national security, the rat race for productive work. Health, learning, dignity, independence, and creative endeavor are defined as little more than the performance of the institutions which claim to serve these end, and their improvement is to depend on allocating more resources to the management of hospitals, schools, and other agencies in question." -Ivan Illich (Deschooling Society)





# HELLO!

Thank you for being part of this class with us, we are really excited to meet more people that are interested in new possibilities for learning.

## : INSIDE THIS BOOK :

is some basic info about the history of education, some resources about alternative and radical ideas, and LOTS of space for reflection. It can be used as a tool for storing new info and the new ideas that arise from the class. Really, it can be used for anything.

# ANYTHING

## Working Definitions of Terms Used:

**Radical:** A critique that addresses the roots of a topic and seeks not absolute answers, but deeper questioning.

**(Radical) Learning:** A natural and intrinsic process inseparable from existing. Learning can happen in an infinite number of formats and contexts and is not bound by physical place or by standards. Learning is something you do, not something someone does to you or gives to you.

*"Learning is not the product of teaching. Learning is the product of the activity of learners" -John Holt (Growing Without Schooling)*

*"Children learn from anything and everything they see. They learn wherever they are, not just in special learning places. They learn much more from things, natural or made, that are real and significant in the world in their own right and not just made in order to help children learn...We can best help children learn, not by deciding what we think they should learn and thinking of ingenious ways to teach it to them, but by making the world, as far as we can, accessible to them, paying serious attention to what they do, answering their questions--if they have any--and helping them explore the things they are most interested in". -John Holt (Learning All the Time)*

On the difference between traditional and radical definitions of learning:

*"...learning signifies control...It is how teachers and school people can distinguish between activities that are designed, planned, and monitored for 'your own good,' and other non-official ones. It is the difference between a simplistic elementary classroom math*



*exercise that is called 'learning' and kids talking about hockey statistics and adding point totals and dividing games played by goals scored that is called something else (usually wasting time)". -Matt Hern (Field Day)*

### **Compulsory Education/Schooling: An**

institutionalized transfer of information and skills from a teacher to a student based on broad standards of what individuals need to know to be part of a cohesive society. The institution claims to level the playing field towards equality by offering all people the same opportunities for learning. However, critics (like us) believe that this process stifles creativity, confidence, critical thinking and problem solving, deadens people's natural desire to learn, and forms a racist, classist, sexist society from the bottom up. It is (and has always been) a manipulative process aimed at funneling young people into mainstream society.

*"Education is the tendency of one man to make another just like himself. Education is culture under restraint, culture is free. [Education is] when the teaching is forced upon the pupil, and when the instruction is exclusive, that is when only those subjects are taught which the educator regards as necessary". -Leo Tolstoy (Tolstoy on Education). See back cover for an Ivan Illich quote that also illustrates this definition.*

**Community:** A group of people that are part of a common geographical space who share some common needs, goals, and values and look out for each other's well-beings. A community is not just a network, a neighborhood, a scene, or a school.\*

*"[Community is] a comprehensible place that those there recognize and acknowledge...[with] a discipline that only makes sense as responsibility to the people and place around you..." -Matt Hern (Field Day)*

Olympia Free School  
Olympia, WA  
[www.olympiafreeschool.org](http://www.olympiafreeschool.org)

Village Free School  
Portland, OR  
[www.villagefreeschool.org](http://www.villagefreeschool.org)

Trillium Charter School  
Portland, OR  
[www.trilliumcharterschool.org](http://www.trilliumcharterschool.org)

Not Back to School Camp  
Eugene, OR  
[www.nbtsc.org](http://www.nbtsc.org)

Santa Cruz Free Skool  
Santa Cruz, CA  
[www.santacruz.freeskool.org](http://www.santacruz.freeskool.org)

Berkeley Free Skool  
Berkeley, CA  
[www.barringtoncollective.org](http://www.barringtoncollective.org)

Making Changes Freedom Center  
San Pablo, CA  
<http://home.att.net/~teolol/MakingChanges.html>

Oak Grove School  
Ojai, CA  
[www.oakgroveschool.com](http://www.oakgroveschool.com)

Paulo Freire Freedom School  
Tucson, AZ  
[www.elpueblointegral.org](http://www.elpueblointegral.org)

The Living School  
Boulder, CO  
[www.livingschool.org](http://www.livingschool.org)

Harmony School  
Bloomington, IN  
[www.harmonyschool.org](http://www.harmonyschool.org)

*Education Revolution ([www.educationrevolution.org](http://www.educationrevolution.org)) is a great resource for all types of alternative education information.*

*Amber Woods: [amberwoods@outgun.com](mailto:amberwoods@outgun.com)  
Amina Baird: [aminaalthea@yahoo.com](mailto:aminaalthea@yahoo.com)*

## List of places we visited for our audio documentary:

The New School  
Newark, DE  
[www.thenewschool.com](http://www.thenewschool.com)

Upattinas's School  
Glenmoore, PA  
[www.upattinas.org](http://www.upattinas.org)

Brooklyn Free School  
Brooklyn, NY  
[www.brooklynfreeschol.org](http://www.brooklynfreeschol.org)

MET (Metro Regional Career and Technical Center)  
Providence, RI  
[www.metcenter.org](http://www.metcenter.org)

Albany Free School  
Albany, NY  
[www.albanyfreeschool.com](http://www.albanyfreeschool.com)

Dane County Transition  
Madison, WI  
[www.dscs.org/DCTS/index.html](http://www.dscs.org/DCTS/index.html)

The Zoo School  
Minneapolis, MN

Missoula Free School  
Missoula, MT  
[www.missoulafreeschool.org](http://www.missoulafreeschool.org)

Purple Thistle Centre  
Vancouver, BC  
[www.mightymatthern.com](http://www.mightymatthern.com)

Windsor House  
Vancouver, BC

Puget Sound Community School  
Seattle, WA  
[www.pscs.org](http://www.pscs.org)

Clearwater School  
Seattle, WA  
[www.clearwaterschool.com](http://www.clearwaterschool.com)

*"an institution like a school is not a community. It can be a wonderful, caring, supportive, lasting place, but it is an institutional affiliation. A community is a collection of disparate individuals in a place, who are committed to that place. The boundaries have to be fluid in some senses, but it about a placed people...and includes the land, water, and animals within that place. A school, even the nicest free school, is not a community, but it may well be part of one". -Matt Hern (Field Day)*

On networks vs. communities:

*"[Networks] provide mechanical (by-the-numbers) solutions to human problems, when a slow organic process of self-awareness, self-discovery, and cooperation is what is required if any solution is to stick... Networks [such as schools] do great harm by appearing enough like real communities to create expectations that they can manage human social and psychological needs. The reality is that they cannot". -John Taylor Gatto (Dumbing Us Down)*

*\*it's important to note that although community and localization are highly emphasized in my thoughts about radical learning, they are so in terms of mutual aid and empowerment. Within the structure of community, it is necessary to be wary of the kind of group mentality that stifles and/or isolates the individual.*



**Unschooling:** A locally-based, organic process of rejecting education/schooling and reclaiming natural learning. Unschoolers see their communities and the whole world as their classroom and direct what and how they learn themselves.

*"Unschooling doesn't denote anything...it's talking about what we're taking ourselves away from. it's about choosing not to participate in the conventional model of learning and education. So, what that leaves behind is not any particular system, it's an empty place...a place from which to look at all kinds of things and discern how we can best live and learn. And I say live before learn because the whole idea that society has that education and learning are a separate domain from life, that's part of the whole construct we are trying to get away from when we call ourselves unschoolers. It's deeper than saying an unschooler is figuring out the best way to study this or that...It's about starting from scratch and asking 'How do I want to live my life?' It's not, 'How am I going to learn everything academic that everyone else knows by the time I'm 18?'... the question is 'What is important to me in life and what can I draw on to create that?'" -paraphrased from an interview with Grace Llewellyn (author of the Teenage Liberation Handbook)*

**Deschooling:** The reclamation of learning as separate from education/schooling in order to change the social attitudes that underlie the need for those oppressive institutions.

*"The project is to disassemble a culture of schooling and give communities and families the opportunity to comprehend what it means to grow up right and to redefine their ideals of learning." - Matt Hern (Field Day)*

### Suggested Reading List:

Gatto, John Taylor  
"Dumbing Us Down"  
"The Underground History of American Education"

Greenberg, Daniel:  
"Free At Last: The Sudbury Valley School"

Hern, Matt  
"Field Day"  
"Deschooling our Lives" (ed.)

Holt, John  
"Instead of Education"  
"Escape From Childhood"  
"Freedom and Beyond"  
"Teach Your Own"  
"Learning All the Time"

Illich, Ivan  
"Deschooling Society"

Kozol, Jonathan  
"Savage Inequalities"

Llewellyn, Grace  
"The Teenage Liberation Handbook"  
"Guerilla Learning"

Mercogliano, Chris  
"Making it Up as We Go Along: The Story of the Albany Free School"

Neill, A.S.  
"Summerhill"

Postman, Neil and Charles Weingartner  
"Teaching as a Subversive Activity"  
"The Soft Revolution"

Prakash, Madhu Suri and Gustavo Esteva  
"Escaping Education: Living As Learning Within Grassroots Cultures"

Tolstoy, Leo  
"Tolstoy on Education"

**Learning Space:** a non-compulsory, non-coercive physical space set up for various types of learning and projects.

**Free School:** a school set up to be a non-coercive atmosphere where young people can self-direct their learning free of curriculum or standards. Examples: Summerhill, Sudbury Valley, and Albany Free School

*Sudbury Valley is "founded upon the principle that learning is best fostered by self-motivation, self-regulation, and self-criticism..."\* -By-Laws of Sudbury (Free At Last)*

*\*every "free school" varies in it's mission but is driven by self-directed learning.*

**Free Skool:** Community learning projects aimed at recapturing people's natural desire to learn and perpetuating lifelong learning. Usually free skools are based on adults (particularly twenty-something punks) sharing knowledge and skills with others in the form of free classes or workshops. The subjects offered can vary widely, but often they are on mostly radical topics. When the project becomes less about the education of radicals, it usually loses the "k" is named a free school or something else.



# Important Moments

≈ 370 BC

**PLATO**

formed philosophical and pedagogical ideas for compulsory state schooling. He said curriculum should be designed by the state to support the state

still, school remained mostly private through Athenian times and the Roman Empire, and aligned with religion after the fall of the Roman Empire

Soon after...

**Horace Mann**

He advocated for public schools in the United States with the idea that giving basic, standardized skills to everyone would ensure full-capacity citizenship and assimilate immigrants into American culture...

so in 1852,

Massachusetts established mandatory attendance in schools, and by the 1880's every state had done the same (by 1943 all of Canada)

NOW THERE'S A UNIVERSAL, FREE, AND MANDATORY SYSTEM OF SCHOOLING...

Ronald Koetzsch explains that the above system was founded on four assumptions...

# Places in Radical Learning

**Sudbury Valley School**

Founded in 1968 in Framingham, Massachusetts, SVS is based on the non-compulsory, non-judgemental treatment of all activities which includes the de-emphasis of classes, curriculum, and parent involvement. Students are not separated by age and the school is run with a democratic meeting.

**Albany Free School**

Founded by Mary Leue in 1969 in Albany, NY on the idea that open, democratic education should be available to all. It is a self-directed learning community that has expanded beyond the school to more small-scale community institutions in inner-city Albany

**John Holt**

(born 1923)  
Wrote a number of books on the ideas of "unschooling" and self-directed education. He equated living with learning and believed that people would learn naturally given freedom to follow their interests and a lot of resources. He was highly influential to

**Grace Llewellyn**

who wrote "The Teenage Liberation Handbook" and encouraged teenagers to take control of their education and lives

**Ivan Illich,  
Matt Hern,  
Purple Thistle  
Centre**

These shouldn't be lumped together, but the first two are amazing writers on the topic of deschooling and the last is a place set up in Vancouver, BC as a resource and activity center for young people



# Important People and

## William Godwin

1797, wrote the first published rejection of national school, saying that schools were only tools built for the maintenance and proliferation of state ideologies and patriotism.

## Francisco Ferrer

formed the Modern Schools in Spain in 1901, because he felt traditional schools wanted to enslave the industrial society, not uplift people to revolution

## Leo Tolstoy

thought that learning should be based on free inquiry and formed a school for Russian peasants (Yasnaya Polyana) that foreshadowed free schools

## A.S. Neill

## Summerhill

Summerhill School was founded in 1921 by A.S. Neill near Dresden, Germany (today it is in Suffolk, England). The school is based on the philosophy that children learn best with freedom from coercion. Students govern their own time and how the school runs. Much of the American free school movement reflects Summerhill.

# In Western Education \*

1700's

## Enlightenment Europe

As governments shifted from monarchies to republics, there emerged many theories on how to systemize national schooling. La Chalotais wrote on how state hegemony needed to replace church hegemony. Napoleon pushed the idea of certification for teaching.

early

1800's

## PRUSSIA

Johann Fichte addressed the German nation proclaiming that schools needed to create a compliant citizenry to follow orders, authority, and hierarchy and become more cohesive. So, a centrally controlled curricula was created that broke days into classes with bells, obedience, and teacher-directed classroom groupings... AND A MODEL WAS FORMED THAT SPREAD

- ① The state has the responsibility to educate all of its citizens.
- ② The state has the right to force all parents to send their children to school.
- ③ The state has the right to force the entire community to pay taxes to support education.
- ④ The state has the right to determine the nature of the education it offers.